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OCT 07 1997

Commission on
Judicial Performance

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

INQUIRY CONCERNING JUDGE
CHRISTOPHER J. SHELDON,
NO. 142.

NOTICE OF FORMAL PROCEEDINGS

To Christopher J. Sheldon, a judge of the Riverside County Superior Court, from January 21, 1992, to the present and at all relevant times therein:

Preliminary investigation pursuant to Rules of the Commission on Judicial Performance, rules 109 and 111, having been made, the Commission on Judicial Performance has concluded that formal proceedings should be instituted to inquire into the charges specified against you herein.

By the following allegations, you are charged with willful misconduct in office, conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute and improper action within the meaning of Article VI, section 18 of the California Constitution providing for removal, censure, or public or private admonishment of a judge or former judge, to wit:

You conducted court business in violation of proper judicial procedures. From approximately July 1995 through February 1996, you

frequently failed to take the bench, or you left the bench, during portions of your misdemeanor pretrial calendar. In your absence from the courtroom, you allowed clerks to enter pleas and execute court documents imposing sentences, enter continuances agreed to by the attorneys and set hearing dates. For some pleas entered in your absence, you allowed clerks to stamp your signature on constitutional rights waiver forms. For some pleas entered in your absence, you signed rights waiver forms after the pretrial calendar was concluded. In other cases, rights waiver forms were neither signed by you, nor stamped with your signature. On some occasions while your pretrial calendar was ongoing, you jogged on stairs inside the courthouse. On some occasions while your pretrial calendar was ongoing, you left the courthouse. You abandoned your role in the adjudicative process and demonstrated a disregard for your obligation to diligently perform the duties of judicial office.

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE, pursuant to Rules of the Commission on Judicial Performance, rule 118, that formal proceedings have been instituted and shall proceed in accordance with Rules of the Commission on Judicial Performance, rules 101-138.

Pursuant to Rules of the Commission on Judicial Performance, rules 104(c) and 119, you must file a written answer to the charges against you within twenty (20) days after service of this notice upon you. The answer shall be filed with the Commission on Judicial Performance, 101 Howard Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California 94105. The answer shall be verified and shall conform in style to subdivision (c) of rule 15 of the Rules on Appeal. The notice of formal proceedings and answer shall constitute the

pleadings. No further pleadings shall be filed and no motion or demurrer shall be filed against any of the pleadings.

This notice of formal proceedings may be amended pursuant to Rules of the Commission on Judicial Performance, rule 128(a).

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

DATED: September 23, 1997
Naile C. Bonner
CHAIRPERSON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SERVICE
OF THE NOTICE OF FORMAL
PROCEEDINGS

I, James E. Friedhofer, on behalf of my client, the Honorable Christopher J. Sheldon, hereby waive personal service of the Notice of Formal Proceedings in Inquiry No. 142 and agree to accept service by mail. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Notice of Formal Proceedings by mail and, therefore, that Judge Sheldon has been properly served pursuant to Rules of the Commission on Judicial Performance, rule 118(c).

Dated: 2 October 1997

James E. Friedhofer
James E. Friedhofer, Esq.
Attorney for the Honorable Christopher J. Sheldon,
Respondent